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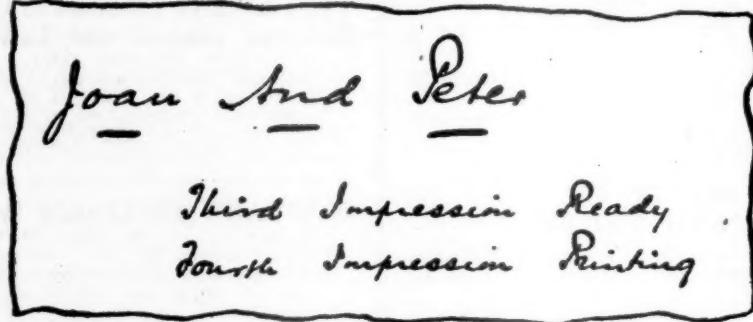
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LITERARY MEN AS STATESMEN.

CICERO and Julian were undoubted authors; but if we begin before the Nativity we expose ourselves to the rebuke of the judge to the advocate in *Les Plaideurs*. "Before the birth of the world," began the pleader—"Ah, advocate," interposed the judge, "let us pass to the Deluge!" In enumerating the authors who were statesmen let us pass from classical and mediæval times to the English Revolution in 1688, which dates the beginning of parliamentary government. The following is our list of men who were first-rate writers and first-rate politicians: Halifax, Bolingbroke, Addison, Chesterfield, Burke, Sheridan, Macaulay, Disraeli, Morley, Bryce, and Wyndham. Swift, Prior, and Gibbon are doubtful cases; they were first-rate men of letters, but their intervention in politics was short and dubious.

Sir George Savile, first Marquis of Halifax, was the leading statesman, in opposition and in office, during the reigns of Charles II, James II, and William III. Charles loved him, as James feared him, for his wit, which was of a rare and restrained order. He was one of the few public men not vexed for want of pence, for he had vast possessions in Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, and when he was bored by politics, or could not see his way, he retired to Rufford, where he meditated those polished pamphlets, which delighted his contemporaries, and are still read by those who love rich and racy English of the seventeenth century. His 'Advice to a Daughter' is full of the kindly wisdom of an accomplished man of the world, and less cynical than his famous grandson's 'Letters to Philip Stanhope.' Those who wish to see the difference between a gentleman and a cad should contrast his 'Character of Charles II' with Bishop Burnet's portrait of the King. The most famous piece of Halifax, to which he owes his nickname, is 'The Character of a Trimmer,' in which he defends the balanced mind, which sees both sides, with a subtlety and humour that Mr. Balfour might envy. He also wrote 'The Anatomy of an Equivalent' (to dissuade the Dissenters from joining the Catholics in opposing the Church party), and 'Moral and Political Maxims,' which for shrewdness and wit do not suffer by comparison with those of Bacon, Pascal, or La Rochefoucauld. They are a mine of gold for the epigrammatist.

Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, pronounced and even written in his day Bullingbroke, was a splendid failure, and is sometimes called the modern Alcibiades. Handsome, well-born, eloquent, without principles moral or political, his short and disastrous career is an illustration of the homely proverb that you cannot burn the candle at both ends—a man cannot sit up at night drinking with wits or women, and at the same time be a Minister of State. When he became Secretary of State in the last three years of Queen Anne's reign, some ladies of more beauty than virtue were heard to say "Harry is Minister, with six thousand guineas a year, and all for us!" He fled to France after the Treaty of Utrecht and the accession of George I, and was impeached and attainted. He lived for about ten years in France, where he married a Frenchwoman of family and some fortune as his second wife. He was pardoned by King George, and allowed to return to his property in England, but not to take his seat in the House of Lords. Swift, Pope, Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, and Gay, formed a literary quintet, who exchanged poems and rather stilted letters, essays, and articles in the 'Craftsman.' He was a master of the grand style, flowing, perspicuous, majestic; but all his performances have the vice of generality, and deserve Burke's criticism that he was "a presumptuous and superficial writer." The best thing he ever wrote is his 'Letter to Sir William Windham,' in which he defends his conduct of the Peace of Utrecht, and lashes the "whimsical" or Hanoverian Tories for deserting him. It is a masterly apology. His essays on Natural Religion, which so excited the wrath of Johnson, are dull and flimsy stuff, only interesting as an example of the deism or

pantheism fashionable in the eighteenth century. His 'Patriot King' and 'Spirit of Patriotism' were written in his old age, and have all the grace of perfect English. As contributions to political philosophy they will be valued only by those who believe that England can be governed without parties by a paternal autocrat. They are famous, not only because of their style, but because they influenced the mind of George III, for whom they were written. George III mounted the throne with the fixed idea of being The Patriot King.

Addison was Chief Secretary twice in Ireland, and late in life was made Secretary of State by the Whigs for eleven months. As a Minister he was a nonentity, and of all the author-statesmen he had the least aptitude for public affairs. But he did something greater than administer a department and sign documents: he reformed the English language, and invented the Essay. What we call in the modern slang of journalism "the middle," the light essay on social or moral subjects, was Addison's patent. Johnson tells us that those who wish to write good English, or Attic prose, as he calls it, should thumb Addison by night and day. This, we think, is exaggerated praise. Sir Roger de Coverley was certainly a great creation: but much of Addison's pleasantries strikes us as being forced; and certainly a hundred years later, Lamb, Hazlitt, Southey, Coleridge, and De Quincey improved the model. Lord Chesterfield was a remarkable instance of hereditary wit, for his mother was the daughter to whom Halifax dedicated his Letter of Advice. Chesterfield was Ambassador at the Hague for three or four years, and some twelve years later he was Viceroy of Ireland for a short time, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for about a year. He wrote some anonymous articles in 'The World,' but his reputation as a statesman and an author rests upon the Letters to his natural son. We have reviewed these Letters so recently in these columns that we shall say no more about them now but that they prove Chesterfield to have been not only a first-rate writer, with a style of never failing correctness and point, but a statesman of liberal and enlightened views such as are not to be discovered in any of his contemporaries.

The genius of two Irishmen lights up the declining days of the eighteenth century. Burke and Sheridan were both leaders in debate when oratory was a cherished art: both occupied subordinate but lucrative posts in the Whig governments: both bequeathed imperishable legacies to our literature: and both levied tribute upon their great friends, with that curious lack of delicacy in pecuniary matters which is characteristic of their countrymen. As a politician it is impossible to praise Sheridan, for he joined Fox and Grey in opposing Pitt during the earlier struggles with France, a want of patriotism that would have excluded him from Parliament in these times. But to no other man has it been given to command the applause of the House of Commons and of Drury Lane at the same time. Byron said that Sheridan had written the best comedy and made the best speech of his day, and when the compliment was repeated to him Sheridan's eyes filled with tears. The effect of his speech on the Begums of Oude was so overwhelming that the House immediately adjourned: luckily, perhaps, for his reputation Sheridan refused a thousand guineas to print it—there was no shorthand reporting in those days. Burke's speeches were very long and delivered with an Irish brogue and in a harsh voice. He became a bore: members cracked nuts, sucked oranges, spat, and coughed whilst he was speaking. Then he wrote the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France,' and the dinner-bell became a national tocsin. Most people of mature age have seen 'The School for Scandal' and 'The Rivals'; some have read 'The Critic.' Few, we fear, have read the 'Reflections,' or the 'Letters on a Regicide Peace,' or the 'Letter to a Noble Lord,' or the 'Thoughts on the Present Discontents,' or the two great speeches on the American War. Those who have not are ignorant of the meaning of political

philosophy, and the ravishing capacity of the English tongue.

Macaulay was the last of the young men of brains presented to the House of Commons by the system of pocket boroughs. He owed his selection entirely to two or three articles in *The Edinburgh Review*. Jeffrey couldn't make out where his new contributor had "picked up that style"; but Holland House didn't trouble about that. The Whig magnates got Lord Lansdowne to return Macaulay for Calne. After the Reform Bill, he was elected for Leeds and appointed Secretary to the Board of Control; went to India as Legal Member of Council with a salary of £10,000; returned after five years with a saving of £40,000; was elected for Edinburgh; became Secretary of State at War; and made several speeches in the House of Commons. Even the present generation, with its scorn of letters, has presumably dipped into the Essays and the History, and perhaps heard of the 'Lays' at some school Speech Day.

But the career of Lord Beaconsfield, the novelist Premier, is, of course, the crowning triumph of the man of letters in politics. Without the assistance of either of the great Party connections, Disraeli fairly wrote himself into Parliament as a free-lance, and within ten years of the failure of his maiden speech (1838) he was the leader of the Tory Party (1848). Thackeray, with inexplicable want of taste and judgment, sneered at 'Coningsby' as a record of lords and castles and pageants. Gladstone, and the sanctimonious Liberals of his set, were shocked at the levity of a Prime Minister who wrote novels. But Disraeli deliberately chose the novel as the vehicle of his creed of Tory Socialism; and he has been justified by the event, for 'Coningsby,' 'Sybil,' 'Tancred,' 'Lothair' and 'Endymion' are read and quoted, and will be read and quoted when none will be bribed to look at the speeches of the Midlothian Campaign.

Lords Morley and Bryce have both occupied high political positions. We cannot be expected to approve their politics: but they have rendered solid services to contemporary literature. Lord Morley has been much a journalist, and much therefore of his writing is doomed to oblivion. His 'Life of Gladstone' may live, for it is well documented; but it is too long. His Autobiography, published the other day, will not rank with the few great works of that order. If Lord Morley's style is cold and severe, Lord Bryce's is copious and erudite. 'The Holy Roman Empire' and 'The American Commonwealth' may retain their position as works of historical reference; but we are not sure: there is a looseness of thought and an indiscriminate eulogy about Lord Bryce's writings that do not make for immortality. Mr. George Wyndham was a born man of letters. His edition of Plutarch, his private correspondence, all that he has written about Shakespeare, bear the true hall-mark of literature. The pity is that he allowed himself to be soured in the filth of Irish politics. He might have led the House of Commons, and have been with us now, had he not put his foot in that accursed region of intrigue, and treason, and mortal unreality.

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est, to gentlemen with ample fortunes and abundant leisure who could keep the auctioneer's hammer poised by their mere frown of hesitation, and whose ambition was probably a posthumous sale to last a week.

The books about books are, to say the truth, for the most part nauseating to the common man because they follow the bad old tradition of the historian which adulates the great and treats the simple as "confused noises without." The common man knows that he cannot specialise in Caxtons, or confine himself to incunabula printed before the year 1472, or make a corner in books which have escaped the attention of all bibliographers. It does not amuse him a bit to find it taken for granted by the chroniclers that book-collecting consists entirely of superlatives, and he repays the implied insult by treating their writings as matters which are too high for him altogether, or, at best, as works of reference which may occasionally be consulted for a fact or a date.

It is curious that so popular a sport as book-hunting has produced but little literature of the descriptive kind. There are a few volumes like John Hill Burton's *Book Hunter* or Lang's *Library* which satisfy some of the sportsman's cravings, but there is no steady flow of articles and books such as rewards the enthusiast in other departments of the chase. The angler, for instance, can confidently reckon on a new book about trout fishing every publishing season, but the man who pursues old books will not find anything to his purpose in the spring or autumn lists once in a lustrum. What literary journal will be bold enough to give him an article entitled "A Day with the Elzevirs," or a series of "Forays in Charing Cross Road and on the Quais?" And yet these books and these articles would be appreciated, might even bring tangible rewards.

For the book-collector is a many-headed creature and his pockets always have room for one volume more. He is also very catholic in his tastes and is prepared to read anything which will tend to convince him that the bargains are not all gone, that there still lurks an occasional first edition in the sixpenny box. It is pathetic to note that he talks of the finding of the *Game and Play of Chesse* on a casual stall as though it were yesterday's news. Really, the story is so old that it has become doubtful whether the thing ever happened or was fondly imagined. It was old in 1914, and of course we have outlived a Methuselah since then.

But things do happen on and about the stalls which are fit to be recorded. There may not be Caxtons any more, but there are certainly quite worthy small fry still in the waters of oblivion, and the lucky adventurer may occasionally fish one out. A sixteenth-century edition of Rabelais, printed in Lyons, two dumpy little volumes which probably got classed as "Quintus Curtius, Elzevir, and others," in some sale catalogue, is the sort of trophy that may still be achieved for a few shillings if you have a bit of luck. Possibly, its real value is not considerable but instinctively you know that it must be worth more than an "and others" price. Early editions of Rabelais, in good condition, must, from the nature of things, be scarce in this country. The story of the stalking and capture of this book on a recent Saturday afternoon could surely be elaborated into an acceptable narrative, given the pen of the practised sporting writer. We can imagine the conclusion with its calculated mixture of regret and triumph. "Ten shillings more and I think I might have captured the Esquemeling, indeed, a desirable prey, but one cannot have everything in this world, and as I walked home to tea, every now and then caressing the Rabelais snug in my pocket, I reflected that I might have done very much worse, and that I might be grateful for a good afternoon."

The book-hunter sets out in very much the same spirit as other sportsmen, whether he perambulates the shops, or lingers adown the rows of outdoor stalls. His chief ambition is to find some well-stocked book shop which is kept by a grocer, which, of course, never happens. It does come about sometimes that the merchant does not know very much about intrinsic

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values, or—and this is more satisfactory, since even the collector may have a shrivelled but not wholly defunct conscience somewhere near his midriff—that a shop is in the hands of one of those hearty merchants whose motto is a quick sale and a modest return. When found, these worthy men deserve support. Indeed, they always get it. The pity is that their stocks are usually but small. Quick sales do not make for those steady accumulations which give the hunter a busy afternoon.

The open-air stall, in London at any rate, is less satisfactory than the shop. Its display is small and it too often depends on doleful "remainders," indigestible theology, algebra, practical chemistry, and other *abiblia*. The eager student may doubtless make his account with such things, but not the collector who wants a touch of humanity or a strain of the unusual in the books he handles. Then the open-air stall is sadly liable to open-air influences. When 'The Marvellings of Martha,' by John Persimmon (why do so many ladies adopt the camouflage of "John"?) has made its appearance on a stall, rain or shine, calm or tempest, day in day out, for a matter of months, its original attractions have faded almost away. It seems better adapted to gun-feeding than shelf-occupying. Sixpence, forsooth!

There are sad memorials in the shops too, especially in the shops which have an outside display; but somehow there is more hope about them. A battered, unpromising cover may conceal something printed in the seventeenth century and that in itself brings consolation, even though the something be but 'Groanings on Several Occasions,' by Nehemiah Dolittle, A.M., sometime Curate of Pigbury, in Kent. The collected pulpit utterances of seventeenth century divines generally have quaintness, and occasionally eloquence, to commend them. If the speculative little volumes which you can see at the far end of the top shelf prove to be nothing more exciting than this, you do not necessarily regret having mounted a ladder to examine them. The titles are often worth the climb and, may be, a shilling to boot.

Guides and counsellors, such as there are, recommend a man who commences book-collecting to specialise in some branch of literature, or some one subject, and it is probable that this advice is followed. Many men limit their ambitions to books about Napoleon, editions of Dickens, pamphlets on bees, and so on, and they are not easily induced to range further afield. It is probable also, that both counsellors and counselled are right in the limitation. You cannot spend more than a certain amount of money on bee literature, because bee literature is restricted in amount. At the same time, you may hope, with earnest attention, to acquire a pretty complete knowledge of what there is, and that is no doubt a satisfaction. If from bees your ambition spreads away to other insects, to birds, beasts, fishes, and ultimately to man himself, your expenses naturally will increase while your mastery of the subject will grow less and less. It is a solemn thought that the more you learn the smaller is the proportion of your knowledge.

Specialisation by subject is efficient, and relatively economical, but it tends to become rather dull. It hampers the clash of minds. What, for instance, can the Dickens collector have in common with the man who treasures the productions of Aldus Manutius and his house? They might conceivably come to blows, for the early editions of Dickens must be typographically abhorrent to the lover of Aldines. Certainly it would be difficult for either to sympathise with the other's hopes, fears, and longings. And so, to greater or less degree, would it be with any given brace of severe specialists. But the amateur who collects on no special principle would have something in common with most of the specialists, for he might conceivably exult in some of the same things. Despised he would doubtless be by masters in conchology or what not, but he would be suffered as a well-meaning sort of audience.

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before. But as a matter of fact it is not likely in most cases to lead wholly into the vague or void. For the guiding principle is there though it cannot be defined in terms. It is determined by the collector's own bent and habits, and his collection is, if not a coherent library of best books, yet a mirror of his mind. It may contain Sir Thomas Browne and Robert Burton and may be innocent of Dryden and Pope. Fielding may be there while George Eliot may be absent. Carlyle and Macaulay may be mutually exclusive. Scott may not be found on a shelf which is hospitable to Thackeray. Antipathies are frequent in all minds and apparent in all random collections. But minds grow, and it is certain that book-hunting helps the process. Not that we recommend it for any such tedious reason, for it needs no conventional support. But it is always well to have the mind serious on one side. Mental improvement is a great and good thing. Under its benign shadow some little waste of time and money, inevitable in this as in all pastimes, may perchance pass unremarked.

NAMES IN FICTION.

REMARKING that there was no name like Wragg on the banks of the Iliuss, Matthew Arnold raged about the touch of grossness in our race, and our shortcoming in the more delicate spiritual perceptions. If modern names in actual life are ugly, unconvincing, or incorrigible, they need not be so in fiction, where the author can style the creatures of his fancy as he will. If they bear unpleasing names which are meant to please, it is his fault. Poetry has to be particular in this respect, for it must be above ridicule. Research has revealed the real names involved in the romantic story of Tennyson's 'Lord of Burleigh.' The lady wooed by the lordly landscape-painter was named Sarah Hoggins—which, it may be observed, only rhymes with "noggins"—and the place where the affair took place bore the unpromising name of Bolas Magna. Wise novelists take trouble about the names of their puppets and the titles of their books. Dickens has left evidence of the extreme care he took, and he was not always successful. Effective names for characters are not easy to find, if one has the artist's zeal for exactly the right thing which sent Balzac on a wandering quest round the streets of Paris. Even, when the novelist has discovered or elaborated what he conceives to be an apt name, he cannot be at ease. His villain's name may belong to a respectable gentleman in real life who does not like the coincidence, and he may get into hot water, or, worse still, into the law-courts. Thackeray had to answer some infuriated Irish journalists who accused him of libelling Miss Hayes, a young actress then performing in London. Her name was also that of the murderer Catherine Hayes, who is the leading figure in Thackeray's 'Catherine,' and a reference to "Mrs. Hayes, who died at Tyburn and subsequently perished in my novel" was followed by such denunciation as only Ireland can produce. The world was, doubtless, dissolved in laughter at such unmerited abuse. To-day writers take more trouble with their nomenclature than they used to. Names directly suggestive of mental or physical qualities, such as Bunyan's Badman and Talkative, Peter Simple and Sir Fretful Plagiary, or the Quirk, Gammon, and Snap firm of solicitors in 'Ten Thousand a Year' are not regarded as adequate, though Thackeray, as well as Dickens, used them now and again. Nor are names directly indicating professions, such as Mr. Mould the undertaker, in fashion. The merely grotesque, like Timothy Tittlebat, have also disappeared. Miss Braddon was a beginner when she called a town Sloppington-on-Sloshy. A modern generation requires something more likely and less obvious than that. Nor do our popular authors leave the imagination cold by talking about the "little town of W—," as Lytton did, carrying on the practice of the eighteenth century. Richardson made Mr. B— famous as the pursuer of Pamela, and Fielding served him right when he wickedly enlarged the name to Mr. Booby. If the right name for any character

is debatable, there are definite associations which cannot be disregarded, however unfair they seem to the philologist. Stiggins was once Stigand, a noble Norman name, but it cannot help being ridiculous and disagreeable now.

But taste leaves many names uncertain in merit, and we declare the kind of label we prefer characters to wear, not with any idea of persuading the irritable race of authors, but rather of evoking that difference of opinion which is the delight of all gossips from crows to critics. The best names are those which seem at first sight to be neutral, ordinary labels with no ulterior meaning, yet tickle the reader's ingenuity pleasantly with the thought that more is meant than meets the eye. Take the name Scadder in 'Martin Chuzzlewit.' Does it not suggest a venomous reptile, a creature with a hint for those that look carefully of the scorpion and the adder? Thackeray's Mr. Honeyman, with his elegant, easy manners is another case in point, though here the suggestion is more obvious. There is a gentleman in 'Pendennis,' Percy Sibwright, who has chambers in the Temple and takes things very comfortably. Is he not meant to be half a sybarite? The Willoughby Patterne of Meredith's 'Egoist' suggests the common design on china, and hints that this Egoist is in us all. Dr. Pangloss, the optimist of Voltaire's 'Candide,' is good, though, perhaps, too obvious. Meredith's editor in 'Diana of the Crossways,' Mr. Tonans, is bad, because it does not strike one as a possible name at all. The epigrammatists Stukely Culbrett and Colney Durance have odd names indeed. Is it unkind to suggest that Meredith named them so, because they are like nothing alive? In place-names Meredith is more convincing. Hillford and Wrexby strike us, for instance, as excellent for villages. Clever authors have discovered of late that places can be made into good names for persons, like Mrs. Humphry Ward's Mr. Wendover and Mr. Marriott Watson's Mr. Rudwick.

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"Gillian's dead, God rest her bier,
How I loved her twenty years syne!"

but the host of later authors have neglected her. The name might be revived in fiction, and thus handed on to life, which copies freely from such sources, but more, we fear, from the cheap novelette than from the serious artist.

Quot homines, tot sententiae. Let every man name his real or dream children as he likes, bethinking him, however, of Walter Shandy, and the "strange kind of magic bias, which good or bad names, as he called them, irresistibly impress upon our characters and conduct." Richard, from the English kings to Richard Swiveller, has been unsatisfactory. John is bound to be a bit of a prig, and James, as a recent autograph writer remarked, does not rise above mediocrity. There may still be those who are ready to echo the complacent Richardson's laudation of his own choice, "What a pretty name is Clementina!" *Candidas* due to Mr. Bernard Shaw may be preparing to storm Parliament some day. Some swains and authors may still commend *Sylvia*, whose charm was reinforced by Mrs. Gaskell, while others scout her as unduly fantastic. Archibald, who had "a remarkably noble presence" in 'East Lynne,' is now grown decidedly comic. Afy, short for Aphrodite, in the same people's classic, has had, so far as we know, no followers in real life. Still there may be such; popular taste is a thing no man can hope to fathom. We feel safe in concluding that no mother will imitate Eloisa in calling her boy *Astrolabus*; but, though there is "a commodity of good names" about, there will be plenty of the sentimental stock of the *feuilleton* fastened on infants who cannot protest, and will grow up (we hope) to indulge a better taste than their godfathers.

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YOUNG Sully, asking Walter Bagehot's advice about a career in the metropolis (the old and the young philosopher both hailed from Bridgwater), received this characteristically wise answer: "The London world is a very Darwinian sort of scramble, and every one should accumulate all possible advantages who means to survive and succeed in it." What young man from the provinces has not received similar advice, and what young man was ever deterred thereby from joining the Darwinian scramble? And so Sully, after a year or two at Göttingen, of which he gives us a pleasant description, illustrating the simple kindly Germany before the war of 1870, came to London and "wrote for the papers." Dr. Sully, although he became a Professor of University College, London, can hardly be ranked amongst the philosophers of the last century, but he was the cause of philosophy in others; that is to say, he was the disciple and literary interpreter of the Victorian philosophers, Bain, Mill, Herbert Spencer, Henry Sidgwick, Darwin, Jevons, Huxley. He was, as it were, a literary

liaison officer between those abstruse writers and the intellectual public, who wanted to know a little, but not too much, about such subjects as psychology and metaphysics. Sully wrote articles in the magazines and weeklies about the books of the great unintelligibles, who patronised him quite kindly, as indeed without him most of their books would have been forgotten or unsold. For his rôle of journalistic go-between John Morley was very useful to Sully, and opened to him the columns of the *Fortnightly* and *Saturday Reviews*. Incidentally, Dr. Sully is an interesting witness to the difficulty of being a good proof-reader, a function which he discharged for the *Pall Mall Gazette* when Morley was editor. He passed 'Arabian Knights' in three or four readings of the sheets of one of his own articles and only chanced to "spot" it before sending off the final revise. The Professor explains this psychologically by saying that "knowledge of the matter makes one more than usually independent of close visual attention to the verbal forms." Whatever the psychological explanation may be, a good proof-reader is a rare treasure. Morley at this time (1871) was a constant contributor to *The Saturday Review*, and by his advice and assistance Sully got several of his articles published. Looking back on his contributions to *The Saturday* (which compared with his essays in *Mind*, and the *Fortnightly*, *Contemporary*, *Nineteenth Century*, etc. were trifles light as air), Professor Sully says: "However slight their intrinsic value, the writing of them was a good discipline for these first days of apprenticeship. It forced upon me the lesson of simplicity and terseness in expression and of touching subjects lightly. It may have favoured the adoption of an unpleasant fashion of the hour, a superior and rather contemptuous critical tone. Yet it put me on my guard, not only against such older blemishes as the indulgence in pretty writing and in the sentimental vein, but against newer ones, such as exaggeration in statement and loose emotional extravagance. We have, since those days, developed a manner of journalism very different from that of the older *Saturday*. Yet it may be questioned whether the change of manner is wholly a gain, whether we have gained an equivalent for the rather savage but very useful watchdog at the gate of letters, from whose dectective eye no disguise of fine clothes could ever save the charlatan." We are glad to shake an old *Saturday Reviewer* by the hand, and to assure him, and all whom it may concern, that the manner of the *Saturday* has not changed, and that Cerberus is still alive, unpoisoned, with his eye still open and his teeth still ready for the impostor and the sentimentalist.

It was inevitable that Sully should, sooner or later, have joined the noble army of "superior Hampsteadians," and he took a cottage on the Heath. "I have a misty idea that I first met Bernard Shaw as a socialist lecturer in some Hampstead drawing room, and that his strongly emphasised supermanly struck harshly upon our Hampstead self-complacency." Byron's instinct in avoiding professional men of letters was right: they are dull and pretentious as a rule, possibly because they keep their best things for their books; perhaps because they are too often distracted by pecuniary cares. "A dinner of wits," said Disraeli, "is a palace of silence." Dr. Sully knew all these great intellectuals of the late Victorian period and gives us pen-sketches of them, which are only moderately interesting, whether the fault be the artist's or the sitter's. Herbert Spencer was, by common consent, an insufferable egoist, insolent and dull beyond endurance. George Eliot's Sunday afternoons in the St. John's Wood villa must have been dreary and solemn enough. Most people agree in ascribing great conversational power to George Meredith and much charm to William James. Unfortunately, Professor Sully gives us no specimens of Meredith's wit or James's charm; and the same criticism applies to his sketch of Leslie Stephen, of whom he was almost the intimate friend. It is no use for a man to tell you that he knew such and such a great man, and that he was humorous, sympathetic, passionate, or what-not, unless he can repeat some of the

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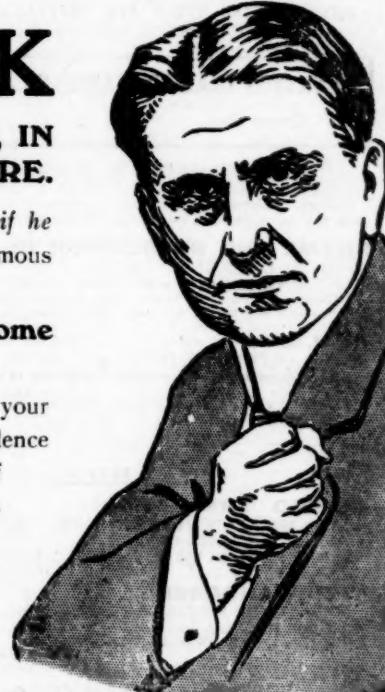
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things he said, or remember how he looked or acted; this bare enumeration of moral qualities is not interesting, though it is what generally passes for biography or anecdote. By those who wish to enjoy the society of the superior Hampsteadians of the last quarter of the last century, Dr. Sully's *Autobiography* should be read, and will certainly be relished.

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The free and easy style of Mr. Vincent Crummles’s supper-table pervades Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch’s lectures on Shakespeare, which include incidentally reminiscences of himself as stage manager and adventurer on the Avon in a “Canader,” to say nothing of visions of Jowett and other gravity-removing figures. “He,” says Johnson, “that supplies life with innocent amusement will be certainly caressed as a pleasing companion.” The Professor deserves such caresses, and we cannot wonder that he is among the fortunate lecturers who can publish their discourses before they reach book-form. Whether it was necessary to talk so much slang and repeat so many good stories to get a hearing for criticism on Shakespeare it is no part of our business to determine. Apart from these gaieties the book gives an excellent view of the “structure, plot, stage-setting, the inter-play, and

development and handling of character “in the dramas, and will, we think, secure a large measure of agreement from Shakespearians. They have, perhaps, been too busy of late years with learned points and small details. They have not been frequently reminded by the managers of our stage that Shakespeare was a playwright.

The Professor frequently abuses the commentators, who are, indeed, silly enough at times; but some of his best things are quotations from Johnson, Coleridge, Dr. A. C. Bradley and other professional critics. Some of his own remarks strike us as a bit obvious. We should be inclined to examine the bumps of the young men and maidens who needed to be told that Polonius was meant to be tedious. That Laertes took after him is not so evident, but had struck Edward Fitzgerald many years since. The original points in these lectures to one who has lived long with Shakespeare and his critics are not many; but perhaps they could not be; and the world nowadays does not remember much that it has read.

The plays selected for treatment cover fairly the most important points in Shakespeare’s beginnings, rise and triumph as a dramatist. The lecturer does not conceal the existence of passages which are sadly botched or even totally unworthy of their context, and the signs of infirmity of purpose in the working out of themes. The strange thing is that these lapses occur notably at the end of Shakespeare’s career when he might have been expected to know his business as a playwright. Who wrote such stuff as the vision of Posthumus in ‘Cymbeline’? Was it Shakespeare? If so, he sank a long way below himself. It will not do as an apology for ‘Cymbeline’ to urge that it contains the finest of Shakespeare’s women. If we grant that, it does not follow that we have a great play. Nor is it a great credit for a man who has invented an extraordinary number of useless intrigues for his plot to finish them all off at a wondrous pace. Such intrigues—the Queen in ‘Cymbeline,’ when it is acted,

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seems to be coming to so much and comes to nothing—should never have been invented at all.

What happened to Shakespeare? Did his streak of indolence develop after the stress of the great tragedies into a serious handicap? Was he, in fact, so worn out that he left town for Stratford after struggling with an aphasia (or agraphia) which made him too concise to be understood and difficult enough to afford commentators a living? Sometimes we have thought so. Again, it is possible that Shakespeare often wrote more than was necessary or suitable and cut his text at rehearsals. This would explain some of the extraordinary statements in the plays as to the time taken by performances. After Shakespeare's departure from London, or even when he was on hand, Burbage and his fellows may have added to his text the popular and topical touches which now distress the critic of art. The assurances of the preface to the First Folio are against this view, but we can't believe them. Nearly all the plays, as Sir Sidney Lee has pointed out, bear the mark of—the theatrical manager. We know what such managers have done and can do with the text of a playwright. Shakespeare, in fact, though now or formerly a national institution, was not perfect as a playwright or a stylist. We can recognise his supreme work without finding it necessary to explain away as many as possible of his lapses. We think the Professor overdoes his explanation of the fumbling touches in the fairy tales of the latest epoch. But a reader who does not always agree with him cannot fail to delight in the many points he has put aptly and wittily.

With the *minutiae* of the subject—sources, text, etc.—the book does not deal much, and here the despaired commentators might score a point or two.

We have already queried the suggestion that "Shakespeare most likely had never seen a Jew in his life." Several Jews in his day may have posed as Spaniards, and there was in particular a famous Jewish physician, a man of many friends attached first to Essex and then to Queen Elizabeth. Roderigo Lopez, like Shylock, came to ruin through a Christian called Antonio. What is said of the "truth of imagination" is excellent, but Keats is misquoted twice, and the example from Callimachus is unfortunate, because the "nightingales" there are the songs of Heraclitus. The epigram exhibits no transient bird like that of Keats, but that belief in literary immortality, a man's survival in his writings after his death, which has attracted authors from Ennius to 'Erewhon' Butler.

In the 'Winter's Tale' (III 3 47) Antigonus leaves Perdita and her small belongings with the words :

There these,
Which may, if fortune please, both breed thee pretty,
And still rest thine."

So Kemble's version, as to which we read here :

"Kemble is all wrong with his commas, as is the Cambridge text. The casket and papers cannot breed Perdita pretty. How should they? The right reading is, of course,
Which may, if fortune please, both breed thee, pretty,
And still rest thine. . . ."

Is this so certain? The efficacy of charms in Shakespeare's day and text is evident. The shepherd who found Perdita talked of "fairy gold," and she might in the fancy of the time have been helped to good looks by her jewellery. La Pucelle (Henry VI, 5 III 2) exclaims : "Now help, ye charming spells and periaps." Such a "periapt" or amulet may well have been among Perdita's belongings, and Antigonus was clearly superstitious. Even if the comma were kept between "breed" and "pretty," the two might be construed together according to Shakespearian punctuation. But the comma is not there in the real text, the Folios have something more decisive, the word "pretty" in brackets.

On the Trial scene in the 'Merchant of Venice,' it is well remarked that all star actors and actresses tend to exaggerate the significance of it. They do indeed, and it is a malady most incident to our players that, whenever they come across a familiar quotation

or a "beauty spot" generally recognised as such, they must exert all their powers to make more of it than the occasion warrants, to drag it out and show the public that they know it better than most of the text. The steady success of 'Hamlet,' whoever acts it, is well-known, and the reason for it may be that it contains so many of the familiar quotations which please the public. Those who, like a famous statesman, want to see what happens when they are once in the story, are perhaps, not negligible, but they are a minority. The intelligent mechanic reads 'Hamlet' at home, and is, if we may trust our own experience, not above explaining to mere critics and literary gentlemen how he could improve it.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

'The B.E.F. Times' (Jenkins, 7s. 6d. net) is a continuation and end of 'The Wipers Times,' published last year. It is fully up to the level of its predecessor, and it will be an interesting document to look back upon in years to come. The gaiety, the humour, and the quiet persistency which underlies it all are more than admirable.

'The Indestructible Nation,' by P. S. O'Hegarty (Maunsell, 4s. net), is a history of the native wars with the English waged in Ireland up to the plantation of Ulster. "Where there is a conflict between English writers and the Irish annals, the Irish annals have been accepted as authoritative." We notice in an otherwise dullly-written book a marked hatred of Dublin, and a belief that religion was not an influence in Irish politics until the penal laws. There is no index.

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